

VZCZCXRO0805
OO RUEHDBU
DE RUEHEK #1201/01 2711048
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 281048Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0231
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2290
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0294
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0305
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0819
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0636
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 0300
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0468
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 2694
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 2077
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BISHKEK 001201

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA A/S BOUCHER FROM AMBASSADOR YOVANOVITCH
OSD FOR DASD SHIVERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN: NEXT STEPS ON MANAS AIR BASE ISSUES

REF: A. SECDEF 121443Z JUN 07

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 816

[1](#)C. SECSTATE 109577

[1](#)D. IIR 6 955 2146 07

BISHKEK 00001201 001.2 OF 004

Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The Kyrgyz have repeatedly requested a U.S. response to their June diplomatic note, which requested changes to the protocol covering payment for access to the base, as well as information on the disposition of the case regarding the December 2006 shooting incident. We understand an OSD team is planning to travel in mid to late October, and recommend that the team come as early as possible. Ambassador also recommends that the USG provide information regarding the investigation and disposition of the case as soon as it is available, as well as the recently-completed CENTAF report on environmental issues and the base. END SUMMARY.

THE ROAD TO OCTOBER

[1](#)2. (C) In June 2007, President Bakiyev told Secretary Gates that the Kyrgyz side has concerns regarding the base, and Secretary Gates responded that the U.S. side was prepared to

SIPDIS

discuss any concerns that were presented (Ref A). Shortly thereafter, the Kyrgyz MFA gave the Ambassador a long-expected diplomatic note requesting changes to the July 2006 Protocol of Intentions as well as additional compensation for the presence of the base (ref B). In July,

an inter-agency group (including NSC, State, JCS, OSD, and CENTAF) met and agreed that a Washington team should travel to Bishkek to respond to the Kyrgyz diplomatic note. The group also agreed to formally refuse the Kyrgyz FCA request regarding the September 2006 collision and deliver the investigation report and information regarding the disposition of the December 2006 shooting incident to the Kyrgyz following the Shanghai Cooperation Summit in mid to late August. In August, on Washington's instructions, the Embassy provided a diplomatic note officially informing the Kyrgyz that a team would come in the early part of September (ref C). In a meeting on August 14, the Ambassador informed President Bakiyev of the same.

KYRGYZ TURNING UP THE VOLUME

13. (C) Since then, the Kyrgyz have repeatedly asked when the Washington team would come to Bishkek. On September 17, National Security Council Secretary Mamytov told the Ambassador that the President was focused on this issue and that "there is still time to resolve the issues." On September 21, Deputy Defense Minister Oruzbayev called in the DATT to express disappointment that the U.S. had not yet reacted to the June diplomatic note (ref D). On September 23, Minister of Foreign Affairs Karabayev raised the June diplomatic note with the Ambassador and noted that he would raise this issue during his Washington consultations at the end of the week. Karabayev said he would also raise the need to provide information on the shooting incident, so that the matter could be closed. He also noted the importance of resolving outstanding environmental issues.

14. (C) On September 25, the President's Foreign Policy Advisor, Islan Ryskulov, called in the Ambassador to inform that the President had requested a formal report on progress regarding U.S. responses to the September 2006 collision, the

BISHKEK 00001201 002.2 OF 004

December 2006 shooting incident, and the June diplomatic note; the Ambassador informed Ryskulov that the U.S. had formally denied the FCA claim for \$5 million, but was prepared to offer a grace payment of \$260,500. Despite numerous discussions with Ryskulov on the shooting incident and our comments that even in Kyrgyzstan deadly force can be employed if a law enforcement officer is threatened, it is clear that Ryskulov, no doubt reflecting President Bakiyev's views, expects that the airman will be punished in some form for killing a Kyrgyz national.

15. (C) We had hoped that the tumultuous domestic political developments in Kyrgyzstan (a surprise referendum on October 21 on yet another constitutional draft and widely expected dissolution of parliament and early elections) would have distracted the Kyrgyz from focusing on the base. To a certain extent this is true, as parliamentarians are all thinking about their own survival and how to prepare for the anticipated elections. We do not think deputies will hold hearings on the base as originally planned, and even Communist Party chief Masaliyev, one of the most vocal opponents of the base, told us that "for now" the base is not on his agenda. Once elections are called, however, press attention could once again focus on the base, particularly if some parties decide to run against the base. The election campaign appears likely to coincide with the one year anniversary of the December 6 shooting incident and the parliament's December 15 non-binding resolution calling on the government to take a number of actions, including considering closing the base.

16. (C) We understand an OSD team is considering coming out to Bishkek the week of October 8 or 15 to discuss the base-related issues raised by the Kyrgyz in their June diplomatic note. We welcome this decision to engage with the Kyrgyz, and fully understand that the team will not be in a position to respond favorably to Kyrgyz requests for

additional compensation. Face-to-face engagement is extremely important here to demonstrate respect for Kyrgyz concerns, even if we cannot meet their expectations. A visit will assist our allies in the Kyrgyz government in defending the base against criticism that the U.S. does not care about Kyrgyzstan and does not take Kyrgyz views into account.

EMBASSY RECOMMENDATION

17. (C) The Ambassador strongly recommends taking the following four steps as soon as possible:

-- Send the OSD team the week of October 8, vice October 15. The team's trip does not have to be sequenced to the release of information regarding the shooting incident (see below). It does need to occur quickly, however, while public and parliamentary (if not presidential) attention is firmly fixed on domestic political issues. If the week of the 8th is not possible, the week of the 15th is our next preference, in order for the visit to occur before the proposed October 21 referendum on a new constitution.

-- Provide an abridged version of the investigation report of the December 6 shooting incident to the Kyrgyz. OSI representatives, the former Base Commander, and the Ambassador have all repeatedly indicated to Kyrgyz interlocutors that we would share the results of our investigation. We believe that we should do so in as detailed a manner as possible, as it will show that the U.S. side thoroughly investigated the incident. We note that we pushed very hard to get the Kyrgyz to release their entire,

BISHKEK 00001201 003.2 OF 004

several hundred page report to us.

-- Provide information regarding the disposition of the case. Until we provide the Kyrgyz with official information regarding how we have concluded the case, we will be unable to put the shooting incident behind us. Lack of resolution on this issue steadily corrodes support for the base and makes it difficult for our allies in the Kyrgyz government to counter arguments that the U.S. does not take Kyrgyz concerns seriously. We expect that as the December 6 anniversary of the shooting incident approaches, President Bakiyev will feel under some pressure to show the Kyrgyz people that he was able to secure justice for the death of a Kyrgyz citizen - especially since it is likely that there will be a parliamentary campaign during this time. We recommend that we provide information regarding the disposition of the case as soon as it is available and well before December. We understand that it is possible - even likely - that no disciplinary action may be taken against the airman, and we have foreshadowed this possibility with the Kyrgyz. As disappointing as this may be to the Kyrgyz, not to convey the final disposition of the case leaves us open to charges that we never completed the investigation and review process, and simply swept the issue under the rug. President Bakiyev can be at times a volatile and unpredictable individual, and in addition to domestic pressures, he faces constant and high-level pressure from Russia to close the base. On September 21, Presidential Chief of Staff Medet Sadyrkulov recounted that he had just the previous day underscored to CSTO Chief Bordyuzha that the Russians should not interfere with the Coalition base. We note that in April 2006, when Bakiyev appeared on national television to issue an ultimatum regarding the base, none of his government advisors knew he was going to do this. We do not expect Bakiyev to pull another such stunt, but if he should do so, we would not get any warning.

-- Provide the August 2007 CENTAF environmental baseline study to the Kyrgyz. On August 10 the Kyrgyz submitted a draft environmental MOU for consideration. This submission coincided with the visit by a USCENTAF environmental team who were conducting an environmental baseline study on Manas

Coalition Airbase. While the report has not been released, those who have seen the report note that the reports shows a stellar environmental record. The Kyrgyz MOU presupposes that the base has been a detriment to the surrounding environment. However, the Kyrgyz admit that they have no scientific proof (only anecdotal evidence). Indeed, the Minister of Agriculture recently stated to the press that the Kyrgyz government did not believe the recent bad harvest in the Chui District was linked to the base. Releasing the report might put pressure on the Kyrgyz to abandon those portions of the MOU which were designed to elicit compensation and focus on areas of cooperation such as conducting bi annual environmental inspections.

18. (C) At this point, we cannot predict with certainty exactly when parliamentary elections may be held -- there are conflicting rumors that the President could disband parliament before the referendum, or that the referendum might be delayed. Regardless of how this plays out, domestic political issues will dominate the Kyrgyz agenda for the next month, providing us a window of opportunity to begin to put these unresolved base issues behind us. But the window will close. Once the Kyrgyz election season begins in earnest, the base -- and any perceived lack of responsiveness to Kyrgyz concerns about it -- could well emerge as a campaign issue, to the detriment of our interests, image and influence here.

BISHKEK 00001201 004.2 OF 004

YOVANOVITCH